The Grief process

Name

Institutional affiliation
Differences between dying and bereavement

Death is commonly defined as the cessation of all body functions. The existence of death can be in many forms. It can be expected or unexpected. Terminal illnesses like cancer often cause expected death. This scenario can be termed as the process of dying. Dying can be, therefore, defined as the last stage of the life process. Bereavement is often defined as a state of loss that occurs when someone dies. The severity of the bereavement will depend on the circumstances in which the individual died. Bereavement can also include feelings such as the health decline of an individual or even the end of a long-lasting relationship. A critical difference between bereavement and dying is that the grief in bereavement can exist without the necessary occurrence of death (Parkes, 2015). The grief in dying, however, involves the eventual occurrence of death. Another critical difference is that the grief process in dying is almost similar in all scenarios, whereas the grief process in bereavement varies according to the related cause of the bereavement. An individual suffering from a chronic illness that would later lead to death often goes through grief; however, bereavement cannot befall the subject who is directly affected by a said process. Dying, therefore, involves the emotional suffering and grief of the individual who will face death in a later date; but the same individual cannot undergo the bereavement process.

Four-component model to the grieving process

Regarding the above stages, I would like to draw a specific focus on the life stage of dying. As discussed, dying involves emotional torture on the individual diagnosed with a chronic illness. This condition, therefore, includes the four components of grief on the individual. The first component is separation distress. This component explains that an individual feels lonely and distanced by those who are healthy and have a great future ahead. This notion leads to him
separating himself from others and the feeling is often accompanied by sadness, pain, helplessness, and anger. Individuals in this stage are prone to suicide as they feel that life already lack meaning. Another component of grief in the dying phase of life is traumatic distress. Traumatic distress involves the state of being in disbelief and shock by the individual. Traumatic distress may be often accompanied by individuals secluding themselves from the regular ongoing (Sims, 2016). The third component of grief in the dying stage of life is the aspect of guilt and regret. Guilt and regret often represent an individual’s lack of belief and admission of his position. The individuals at this point often wish they had done things differently and that they blame everything on themselves. The last component is the self-withdrawal. Individuals often find themselves at the climax of emotions. This climax is often accompanied by self-isolation and seclusion. At this point, they feel that they need their time alone and they prefer the peace of mind in their last days of life. While these four components are common in all individuals in their dying stage of life, many other symptoms also exist. Symptoms such as mild depression, insomnia, reduced levels of body energy and lack of interest in activities also manifest themselves in this stage of life.

**Real life example**

Relating the previous discussion to real-life experience, I can compare this to a relative who was diagnosed by cancer. The disease had caused so much pain to her and had at one time requested to be killed (Gray, 2018). Her death was, therefore, expected and this traumatized her even more. The doctors had already given up on her recovery process, and all the efforts to rely on chemotherapy had proven futile. Depression had taken over her, and she had secluded herself from other family members. Eventually, she lost interest in activities she loved such as watching romantic movies and also recorded a gradual decline in body energy. One day my mother talked
to her, and she ascertained her of having hope and faith in the Lord. Her response was, however, satirical. She told my mother that she had suffered enough even to want to live. In my understanding, she had lost all hope and life to her was meaningless.

**Elisabeth Kubler-Ross’s five stages of dying**

The first stage of grief by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross is denial. Individuals in this stage have lost interest in life and are in shock. There is a state of confusion as individuals are not sure of the next move. Accepting reality is essential as it will facilitate the beginning of the healing process. An example is an individual who has been notified of the death of a close friend. The second stage is anger. This stage involves a situation where emotions overwhelm an individual, and they are trying to link anything to the real occurrence of the loss. An example is being angry with someone who did not attend the burial of your loved one or friend (Kubler-Ross, 2014). The third stage is bargaining. In bargaining, an individual often devotes their energy to counter the event that caused the loss. An example of this would be a situation where a loved one died of cancer; the bargain would be to diet and live a healthy life. The fourth stage is depression. In depression, emotions take over, and the individual is thrown into a state of mental illness. Individuals withdraw from life and everything in this stage. An example is the feeling of emptiness, loneliness, and regret when a loved one has died. The last stage is acceptance. In acceptance, an individual accepts that the occurrence was permanent and their loved one is never coming back. An individual learns to live with this notion and is deemed to have moved on. An example is an individual who has made out of the depression stage and can now socially interact with others and be happy. Acceptance is revolutionary as it marks the last stage of the grief process.
References


